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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0304
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7293
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1316
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6635
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2811
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1229
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2632
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHWSMRC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: RED MOSQUE - SITREP JULY 9, 1600 LOCAL

REF: ISLAMABAD 2960 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: There has been no major change in the Red Mosque situation since Post's July 7 report (reftel), but the government appears to be preparing for a final siege. Security forces and militants exchanged sporadic gunfire on July 8 and 9, and mosque leader Ghazi continues to refuse to surrender. All Mission staff are safe and accounted for, and except for the G6 sector, which remains under curfew, the city is operating normally. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Media reported that on Sunday President Musharraf issued a go-ahead order for security forces to "act decisively." Government sources notified post that a major operation would take place Sunday night, but a plan to storm the girls' dorm next to the mosque was stopped when security forces discovered it was booby-trapped. The Army continues to conduct aerial surveillance of the mosque. Militants fatally shot a Pakistan Special Forces Commander during an abortive raid attempt by authorities on Sunday morning, and later on the same day several militants were arrested while trying to escape the mosque.

¶3. (SBU) Groups of religious leaders continue to urge Ghazi to release women and children still inside the compound. Select religious leaders who recently met with Ghazi will see Prime Minister Aziz today. Washington may wish to review reporting in other channels.

PATTERSON